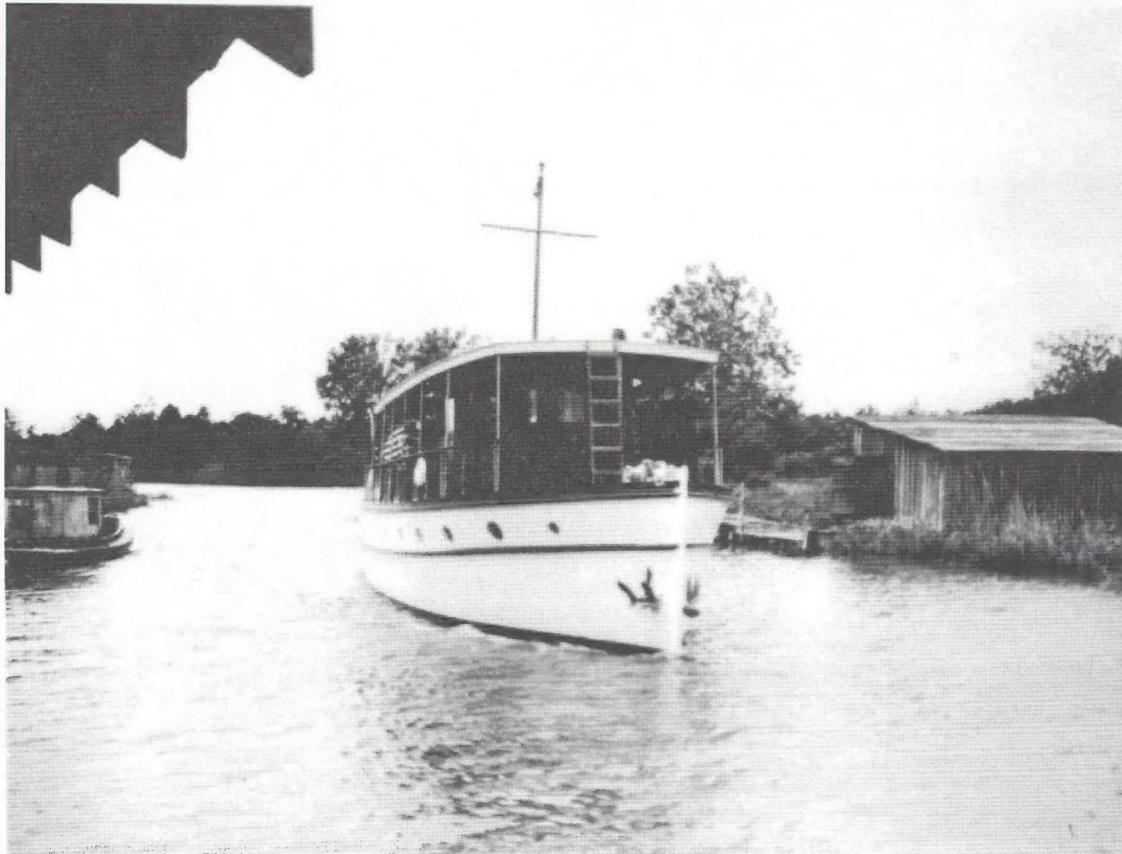


SUFFOLK NANSEMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 19, Issue 4

November 2010



Bernard Godwin's yacht Vivian II 1928 on Chuckatuck Creek. At one time the creek was navigable all the way up to the mill on present day Rt. 10. Godwin owned the grist mill, power plant and the adjacent ice house in the 1920s. The small workboat to the left might have been used for crabbing or oystering or to haul truck (produce). Picture courtesy Lynn Rose

Along the Chuckatuck Creek—then and now

The water was always the thing. The native Americans rode the waters and ate the fish, crabs and oysters. The first Englishmen arrived by water. John Smith exploring from Jamestown in September 1608 mentioned Chuckatuck Creek. (See *John Smith in the Chesapeake* available at the Train Station.) The early Englishmen settled along the water.

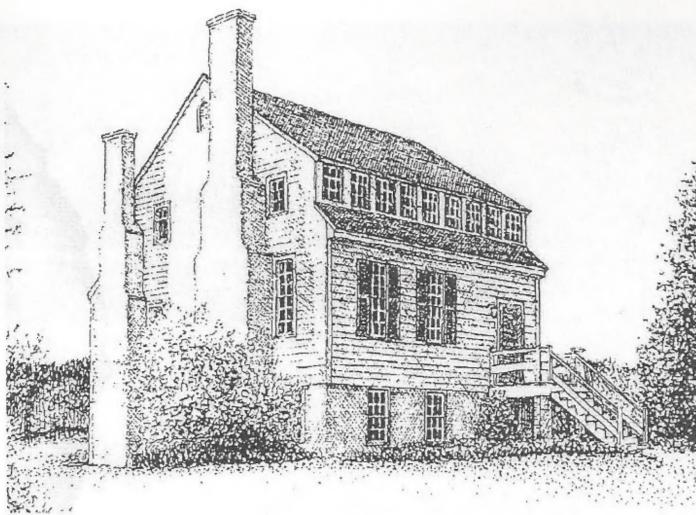
Soon the Chuckatuck Creek, like many other waterways, was dammed and used as a power source to turn the mill wheel on the mill that still stands at the head of the Creek. A mill was built on this site by the late 1600s and the site was used as a mill well into the 20th century.

Packet boats moved up and down the creek into the 1920s and beyond, moving produce and supplies as well as mail. Today the creek attracts new residents who are not necessarily farmers but rather people who enjoy the Creek for its beauty and its recreational value.

On this year's Candlelight Tour we visit five homes—some old and some new—on historic sites from near the head of the Creek to its mouth. **Please join us for our 34th Annual Candlelight Tour on December 4 and 5.**



Charles Bernard Godwin, (1860-1944) and his wife Martha Carroll Whitney Godwin (1859-1925) walking to church at Wesley Chapel on Kings Highway. SNHS collection



Drawing from Carolyn Bickham's Phillips Farm Cookbook

lived at Cypress Vale Farm where she reared her children. Her daughter Sallie married Confederate General George Pickett. Sara married Thomas Corbell, John David's brother.

The house changed hands many times and was in a grave state of disrepair by the 1980s. The current owners carried out a sensitive restoration/renovation 1982-4. In the last year an addition was made that increased livability but in no way detracts from the original house. A diminutive guest house is a charming new addition to the back yard. *Some of this information from the Phillips Farm Cookbook by Carolyn Bickham. Home of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Bickham.*



The Pitt children, Emmett, Lucile and Percival, shown c. 1890. Picture courtesy Mary Deane Lachicotte Johnson, Lucile's daughter.

Percy Pitt (1886-1957)

George Pitt and his wife Berta bought the Phillips Farm in 1888 and owned it until 1926. One member of the Pitt family about whom we've often heard was George's son Percival, called Percy.

Percy was a *bon vivant*. He was a big man (over 300 lbs.) with a great appetite for life. In spite of his size he was said to have been very light on his feet. He went to all the dances and swept the ladies off their feet. He loved moving pictures and came to town to the Chadwick Theater every Saturday for the matinee. He sat right down front in his own special seat—the management had removed the arm rest between two regular seats to make a double seat for Percy.

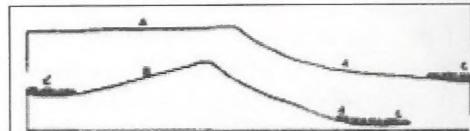
This information is from the grandson of a lady who was one of Percy's dance partners. Does anyone know more?

Suffolk Escarpment

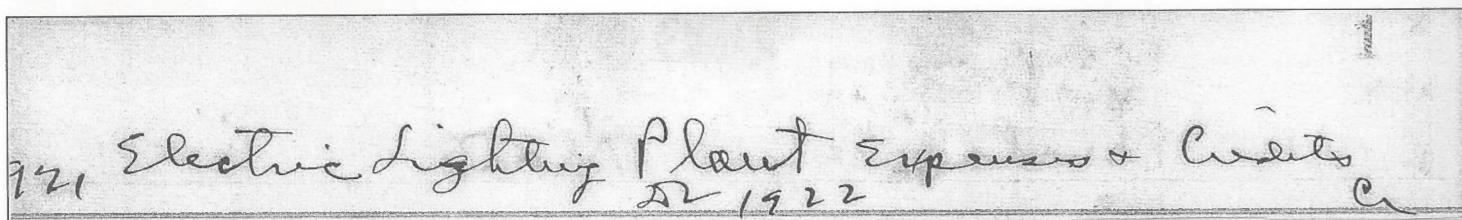
The Suffolk Escarpment is, simply put, the shore of an ancient sea. It runs along the edge of the Dismal Swamp in North Carolina, through Suffolk and, according to some sources, to the Peninsula. The Phillips Farm sits on the shore and looks out across Route 10 to the floor of the ancient sea and Lone Star Lakes. These lakes or pits were created when Lone Star Cement dug marl—decayed seashells—years ago.



George Pitt added the front porch about 1890-1900. All additions were removed by the Bickhams in the 1980s to uncover the original structure. Photo thanks to Carolyn Bickham



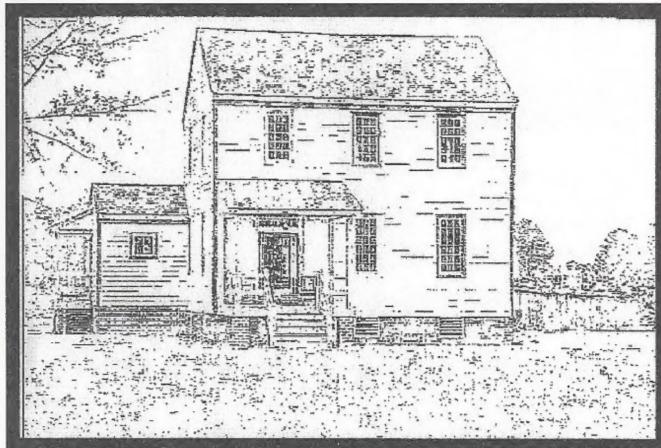
Typical sections of Nansemond escarpment from General account of the fresh-water morasses of the United States, by Nathaniel Southgate Shaler.



This is the top of a ledger page from Bernard Godwin's Electric Light Plant in Chuckatuck. Powered by the mill wheel, this was just down the road from the Phillips Farm.

Cherry Grove

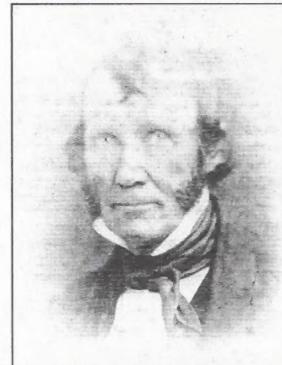
The land that came to be known as **Cherry Grove** was a large land grant to the Godwin family in the 1600s. The manor house or farm house was once a large brick residence that stood on the creek at or near the end of present day Cherry Grove Road North until the house was destroyed by fire years ago. Bit by bit the land was divided and eventually sold out of the family.



The Barlow house. Photos courtesy Joseph Barlow

Cotton Plains Farm, 696 Cherry Grove Road. This land was part of the Godwin land grant in the 1600s. The house is believed to have been built by one of the Godwins between 1780-1800. In fact when the current owners were renovating the house they found behind the plaster a broken piece of glass with the name John Godwin and a date thought to be 1784.

Robert and Elizabeth Lawrence bought the land and the house soon after their 1814 marriage and they and their heirs owned Cotton Plains farm until 1899. None of the subsequent owners has held the property as long. Interestingly, the buyer in 1899 was Berta Pitt, mother of Percy Pitt. (See Phillips Farm.)



The old house was uninhabited by the mid twentieth century. It had no plumbing, no wiring and at some point the chimneys fell down. The farm was bought by Joe and Margaret Barlow in 1958. They built a modern house in which they reared their children. The old Godwin house was used for storage.

Ten years ago the Barlows' son Joseph and his wife Shelley undertook a restoration/renovation of the old house to make it their home and the hub of a working farm. Although all these Tour sites were originally working farms, this is the only site that still fits that description. The work on the house is ongoing. One of the missing chimneys has just been replaced this fall. *Home of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Barlow.*



Robert Lawrence 8/17/1798—10/29/1866 and Elizabeth Lawrence 10/20/1797—10/26/1877

The Eure House, 1882 Cherry Grove Rd. This contemporary house, situated at the confluence of Brewer's Creek and Chuckatuck Creek, commands a fine view of the Chuckatuck Creek bridge and glimpses of the watermen's villages of Crittenden and Eclipse. This site was also on the old Godwin grant. It is near the original Cherry Grove house site.

Built in 1980, the house was designed by architect John Tymoff. Fine regional antiques and contemporary artwork by local artists create an attractive, interesting interior. Look for charming vignettes that include antique dolls, doll furniture and teddy bears. Of particular note is a large Meissen piece from the Obici House that was purchased after Mr. Obici's death. *Home of Mr. & Mrs. Jack Eure.*

Work boats typical of those used on the creek will be at the Eure's dock, weather permitting, thanks to members of the Crittenden, Eclipse & Hobson Heritage group and the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance.

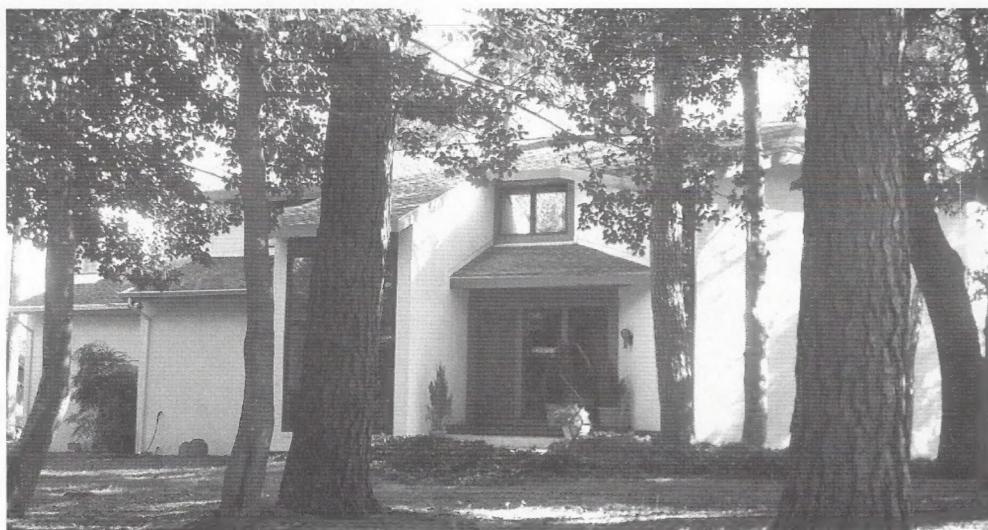


Photo thanks to Mary Ann Eure



Houses on Tour will be decorated by members of the Nansemond River, Suffolk, Village and Westover Garden Clubs and by individual decorators.

Cotten Farm

When Elizabeth Phillips married John David Corbell in 1842 they lived on Cypress Vale farm which eventually became known as Cotten Farm. Here their eight children grew up. One of the eight was Sallie (1843-1931) who married General George Pickett and changed her first name to LaSalle. Another was Virginia Alice (1853-1937) who married William Ferdinand Cotten. The Cottens stayed on the farm and gave Cotten Farm its newer name.

Two of our Tour houses are modern additions to the Cotten Farm landscape.



A great romance—Confederate Gen. George E. Pickett and LaSalle (Sallie) Corbell. From The Quiet Regiment by SNHS, available at the Train Station.



Left: Front view of Cypress Vale Farmhouse, the Corbell/Cotten home on Chuckatuck Creek, taken 1950. (Not open for Tour.) Photo thanks to Roy Pope

The Cherry House, 1833 Cotton Farm Lane (right). (Note the City ignored the Cotten family name when they made the street signs.) This house, Quail Cove, was built in 1989 and a significant addition was made in 2007. The traditional Williamsburg style house was designed by Mr. Cherry and sits on more than 20 acres of the original Corbell/Cotten farm. With exquisite creek views on one side and a horse pasture on the other, it is a rather idyllic setting. Look for a mural on the dining room wall by Suffolk Artist Barbara West. *Home of Mr. & Mrs. O. L. Cherry.*



Photo by Jackie Cherry



The Harris House, 1725 Cotton Farm Lane, was built in 2003. It was bought by the current owners in 2005 and given a completely new look. Now a coastal style cottage overlooking the Chuckatuck Creek, this is not only an attractive home with beautiful views but also a studio for Mrs. Harris' painting in oil and pastels. The views often provide the subject. Mrs. Harris is from a long line of artists and the majority of the work displayed in her home has been done by family members.

The homeowners both have roots in Newport News and Hampton. The Peninsula was connected to upper Nansemond County by ferry before the James River Bridge system was built in 1927.

Photo by Barbara Harris

neighborhood artists are planning an art show and sale in her studio just for this year's Tour guests. Come excited to see what's there and, maybe, take home a memento of Chuckatuck Creek. *Home of Mr. & Mrs. Stan Harris.*

Art for Sale! Mrs. Harris and other



Oakland Christian Church

This building was constructed in 1851 and was originally used as a Methodist Church. It was abandoned in 1872 when the Methodist Church merged with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

That same year the church that would become Oakland Christian Church was formed under Dr. William Brock Wellons, founding pastor of several other churches such as Berea, Bethlehem and Suffolk Christian Church. The old Methodist building became a new Christian Church.

During Tour weekend this Church has kindly granted space for numerous Tour activities. This will be the site of our popular annual **Sugar**

Plum Kitchen and **Tour Tickets** will be sold here. At the same site enjoy and be edified by an exhibit presented by Lynn Rose and others from the **Chuckatuck Historical Association**. Also look for information from the new **Nansemond River Preservation Alliance** which includes Chuckatuck Creek among its interests.

Finally, there will be **Music**--a variety of musicians will perform at the Church from time to time both Saturday and Sunday. Also there will be **limited shuttle service** offered from this site.

Tickets will only be available at Oakland and the Train Station on Tour days, not at any other sites.

Mills E. Godwin, Jr. 1914-1999

For any readers who might somehow have missed this information, Chuckatuck's own Mills Godwin was twice Governor of Virginia, 1966-1970 and 1974-1978. The Godwin family has been living along the Chuckatuck Creek since the 1600s.

Mills Godwin grew up in Chuckatuck and was a life long member of Oakland Christian Church. He graduated from Chuckatuck High and later lived in Chuckatuck while he practiced law in Suffolk.

The education building at Oakland Christian Church is named for Mills Godwin. The new Suffolk courthouse is named for him, as well.

The following is from *Notes on the Mills Godwin Family of Isle of Wight and Nansemond Counties, Virginia*:

THE GODWINS From Nansemond and Isle of Wight Counties, Virginia, Who Have Served In The GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA 1619 - 1978 Known as the Grand Assembly 1632 - 1679

THOMAS GODWIN I

A member of the House of Burgesses from Nansemond County in 1654 and 1655 and Speaker of the House in 1676.

THOMAS GODWIN II

A member of the House of Burgesses from Nansemond County 1710-14. First elected in 1693, but in a contest that followed he was denied a seat in that session.

THOMAS GODWIN III

A member of the House of Burgesses from Nansemond County 1723-26.

JOSEPH GODWIN

A member of the House of Burgesses from Isle of Wight County, Virginia, 1710-14, 1723-26, and 1728-34.

Another Joseph Godwin served in the Senate of Virginia representing Nansemond, Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties from 1809-17.

SHEMUEL GODWIN

A member of the House of Delegates from Isle of Wight County 1844-47.

KINCHEN GODWIN

A member of the House of Delegates from Nansemond County 1780-85 and again in 1791.

He also served in the Senate of Virginia representing the counties of Nansemond, Norfolk and Princess Anne in the sessions of 1793 and 1794.

JOSIAH GODWIN

A member of the House of Delegates from Nansemond County 1798 and 1799.

MILLS E. GODWIN, JR.

A member of the House of Delegates from Nansemond County and the City of Suffolk 1948-1952.

A member of the Senate of Virginia representing the Counties of Nansemond, Isle of Wight and Southampton and the City of Suffolk 1952-62.

President of the Senate and Lieutenant Governor 1962-66.

On November 2, 1965, he was elected Governor of Virginia and was elected a second time on November 7, 1973, the first person to be twice elected by a vote of the people.



Mills E. Godwin, Jr., with family members on the day he was sworn in as Lt. Gov. in 1962, l-r: Irene Minton Godwin, daughter of William A. Godwin; Ann Godwin Moore, grand-daughter of Bernard W. Godwin, Sr.; Lt. Gov. Godwin; Grace Pendleton Godwin, wife of William H. Godwin; William H. Godwin, uncle of Mills E. Godwin; and Bernard W. Godwin, Jr. SNHS collection



Ad from the American Beacon 1834.

The Anglican Church in Chuckatuck

Notes excerpted from W.E. McClenny's paper presented at a meeting of the Nansemond Chapter of the A.P.V.A. in 1923. The old Chuckatuck Church, present day St. John's, is on Kings Highway. (Not on Tour.)

November 15, 1752. Vestry met at Mathias Brickel's house. New church was ordered at Chuckatuck 60 x 30 feet from out to out with compass sealing and plans were made and advertised in the Virginia Gazette giving the time and place said church is to be set up to the cheapest undertaker, and Jonathan Godwin, Anthony Holladay and John King were to lay out the ground for the said church and yard.

May 20, 1753. The vestry met at Chuckatuck Church. The contract was let to Moses Allmon for £ 395.5. current money of Virginia.

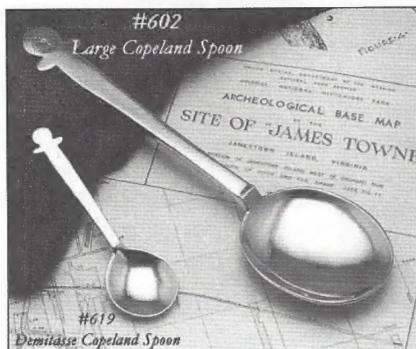
1763. New benches put in Chuckatuck Church at a cost of 200 lbs. of tobacco.

April 24, 1764. Badges were ordered for the poor to be worn according to the law.

April 6, 1779. Chuckatuck Church was crowded and a gallery was proposed by the vestry.

Hats Off to

- Dr. L. D. Britt, Suffolk native and graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, recently elected President of the American College of Surgeons and presented with the Surgeon General's Medallion.
- Tommy O'Connor, of O'Connor & Co., recipient of an ALLI award given by the Cultural Alliance of Greater Tidewater for helping with the renovations of the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts.



The Copeland Spoon

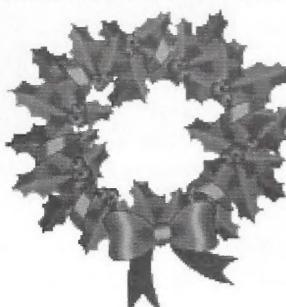
This beautiful spoon is an authentic reproduction of the oldest dated piece of American pewter. The original spoon was made in **Chuckatuck** in 1675 by Joseph Copeland. It was found in Jamestown in the 1930s bearing the stamp of the maker and the date and is now on display in the Archaearium on Jamestown Island.

These handsome reproductions are on sale at the **Train Station** and come gift-boxed. A wonderful gift for brides, babies, for Christmas or anytime.

Available in three sizes:
4" baby or demitasse, \$24
6" teaspoon, \$30
8" serving spoon, \$38

Please patronize the sponsors of our 34th Annual Candlelight Tour:

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Wishing you the merriest!

Dawson House Update

The hot dry summer had one great outcome—the Dawson House exterior was painted!

The house is now about to get new heating and cooling upgrades thanks to your generous contributions. The contract has been awarded to Suffolk Sheet Metal. The addition of a cooling system particularly will help with the storage of our collections. We'll be able to actually use the space we have!

The fall meeting at the house was fun and informative. Special thanks to those who provided refreshments, to our three students who modeled costumes and especially to member Blanche Rountree who played old favorites and patriotic songs on the piano.

Below top: Student members, l-r, Virginia Cox, Lindsey Bulls and Emily Bazemore; bottom: members Bill Lynch, Jean Carmean and Dixie Bollinger enjoy music by Blanche Rountree.



Congratulations to Suffolk Christian Church, founded in 1862 by Dr. William Brock Wellons (who also founded Oakland Christian Church) and celebrating its 150th anniversary this fall.

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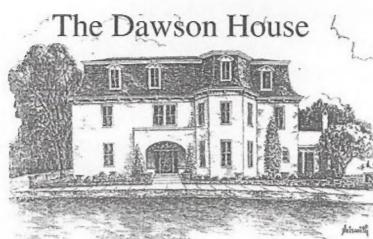
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Julie Johnson, Administrative Director



Board member Gin Staylor with members Kay Goldberg and Jane Womack at the October member meeting in the Dawson House.

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Remember the **Train Station Gift Shop** when you're shopping for Christmas. *The Peanut Book*, *The Quiet Regiment*, the Arcadia books about Suffolk and many more are great additions to any Suffolkian's collection.

Don't forget those peanuts with the Train Station label!

NEW ITEM at the Train Station Giftshop

Reprint of Henry Hardesty's *Nansemond and Southampton County Families and History*, first published in 1883, with some pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary War history and Civil War history with lists of companies and their members.

There is also a particularly interesting section about Suffolk in World War I. Most interesting to this reader are the Nansemond and Southampton Personal Histories written in the 1880s. 188 pages (including a generous index), paperback.

Included in the biographies are:

- John Wesley Ames
- Beverly P. Baker
- James Richard Baker
- Phillip Barrand Baker, M.D.
- Thomas H. Barnes
- William Redick Brothers
- Richard L. Brewer
- Felton Brinkley
- Jackson Richard Brinkley
- Phillip B. Brinkley
- Richard H. Brinkley
- George Washington Bunting
- Caleb Rogers Busby
- George Washington Butts
- and 82 others

Gifts and Memorials

through November 10, 2010

To the Dawson House

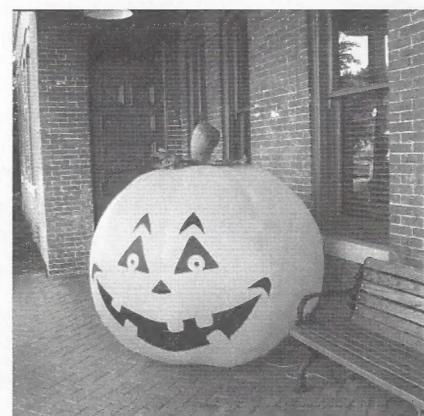
- In memory of Esta Everett Kincaid
John & Mary Lawrence Harrell
- John & Julie Johnson

To Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

- In memory of James L. McLemore, III
James & Elizabeth Gordon
- In memory of R. Curtis Saunders, Jr.
James & Elizabeth Gordon
- In memory of Esta Everett Kincaid
James & Elizabeth Gordon
Tom & Sue Woodward
- Don & Kay Goldberg
- Members of Suffolk High School Class of 1965
- Junto Woman's Club



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Marie Carmean, Train Station Assistant



Halloween at the Train Station



On September 27, 1645, Richard Bartlett was granted 200 acres at the head of Chuckatuck Creek for construction of a gristmill. The early mill burned at some date and was replaced so the actual construction date of this building is not known. The mill is on Rt. 10, now named Godwin Boulevard, which has long been the road from Suffolk to Smithfield.

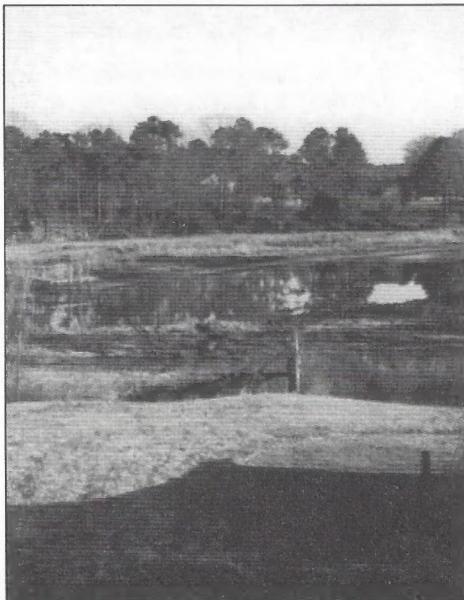
For three centuries the mill, with its ancient stones, ground corn. During the early 20th century the mill wheel also furnished electrical power for Chuckatuck. That's when the mill was owned by Bernard Godwin who also owned an adjacent ice house. For the past 30 years the mill has been used by various other businesses. *Photo courtesy Lynn Barlow.*



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View from back of Barlow home across Chuckatuck Creek.